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The Influence of External Actors on Security Cooperation in the MENA:
Are the US and EU Security Interests in the MENA Complementary or Conflictive?

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1. Security policy priorities

When pondering whether a country or regional area is a priority to another country, area or international organisation, we must think in terms of "geopolitics". From this perspective, in order to affirm that some countries are a priority to the European Union or to the United States we should analyse the interests of the Union and of the USA in this region, focusing on geographical, economic, racial, cultural and religious elements. Of course, political and security aspects also have to be also taken into account to analyse the relations among countries because trade and aid are not everything. It is the combination of all the elements mentioned which will make possible to keep and to promote the peace and the stability in the world.

If regional actors cannot manage their heterogeneous preferences to work in the promotion of peace and stability by themselves, then an external actor or a combination of external actors could intervene. However, if the preferences of external actors in security matters in a region are heterogeneous, incentives for security cooperation within that area will not exist or will be smaller than if preferences were similar.

Taking these ideas into account, this paper will pay attention to the geopolitical influence of external actors in MENA, focusing on two such actors: United States and the European Union. The paper begins with an account of the security policy priorities of these two actors regarding MENA. On this basis, we intend to determine if the US and EU foreign and security objectives towards MENA are compatible or not

The second part of the paper analyses the existing instruments for cooperation in MENA. On the one hand, we examine the instruments for security cooperation between the US and the EU and, on the other hand, we seek other possibilities for further cooperation. We will conclude with an analysis of the existence or not-existence of external incentives for security cooperation and possible solutions.

2. Is the MENA a priority for the European Union Security?

1. Introduction

In order to manage relations that help it achieve its geopolitical objectives, the European Union follows a Foreign Policy characterised by the establishment of a network of contacts across the world. The initial contacts usually are focused on commercial issues that are

complemented, eventually, with other aims such as technical and financial aid, economic reforms, development of infrastructure, development aid, health programmes, education, cooperation in civil and criminal matters, and other issues. All these aspects can be included as objectives in agreements, signed between the European Union and third countries individually, which offer an adequate framework for a political dialogue between the two parties.

Moreover, these elements represent what we can designate as the five dimensions of the External Action of the European Union, summed up as: External Economic Relations; Aid Development; Human Rights; Foreign and Common Security Policy; and European Security and Defence Policy. The importance and development of these dimensions vary according to the geographical area with which the Union wants to cooperate (Article 3.2° TEU).

With regards to the countries with which the European Union has established specific relations, they have changed according to the enlargements and risks that are emerging. Some of the former associated states are now member states and third countries are currently neighbour countries with which progress towards a close cooperation is necessary.

Focusing on the Mediterranean countries, the cooperation with them constitutes a priority for the European Union since 1995, when the Barcelona Process began. However, recently it has received a new impetus thanks to the European Neighbourhood Policy – ENP (European Commission, 2005c:11).

2. The EU approach towards MENA

2.1. Foreign Policy issues

Relations with the MENA region are carried out on a different basis, or following three different approaches:

- By virtue of the Barcelona Process and the ENP -"the newest foreign policy instruments and a major priority for the Commission" (Ferrero-Waldner, 2006:3) -, the EU works with the Arab countries of the South and East - Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey - plus Israel and the Palestine Territories.

- By virtue of a contractual agreement, the EU has kept relations with some countries of the Middle East since the 80´s, when the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) was created (1981) and signed a Cooperation

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Agreement with the European Community (1989). The state parties of this Council are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.

- By virtue of bilateral relations, the EU cooperates with Iran, Iraq and Yemen[1]. The relations with the two first countries are developed without any contractual link, while the relations with Yemen are based on a Cooperation Agreement signed in 1984 and have extended on different occasions, the last in 1997.

2.2. Security issues

Is this cooperation with MENA region relevant to guaranteeing the European Union's security? The threats and challenges that threaten the current international society and, therefore, the European Union have varied during the last decades. Due to globalisation, the new technologies and the internationalisation of crimes, when we talk about security matters, it is essential to bear in mind that the internal and external aspects of security are inextricably linked and no single country or regional organisation is able to tackle today's complex problems on its own.

2.2.1. Effective multilateralism

For this reason, the European Union considers effective multilateralism as one of its main strategic objectives (European Union, 2003: 9-10). It is possible to place the cooperation of the European Union with third countries, and thus with MENA countries in general, in the development of this objective. However, multilateralism does not only mean to work with a great number of countries, but also to do it in different fields. In this sense, the European Commission (European Commission, 2005c:6) states that the political priorities of the Union, which provide the overall basis for relations with thirds countries, can be derived from the Hague Programme and its Action Plan (European Commission, 2005a), while thematic priorities are set out in specialised Strategies and Action Plans - for example, the Action Plan against Terrorism (European Council, 2004) or the Strategic Concept of Organised Crime (European Commission, 2005b)-.

The Hague Programme and its Action Plan are instruments of the European Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. The improvement of the external dimension of the Justice and Home Affairs "contributes to the establishment of the internal area of freedom, security and justice

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[1] See http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/

and at the same time supports the political objectives of the European Union's external relations, including sharing and promoting the values of freedom, security and justice in third countries" (European Commission, 2005c:4).

According to the European Security Strategy 2003, "Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free". The violence of the two world wars that marked the first half of the twentieth century "has given way to a period of peace and stability unprecedented in European history" (European Union, 2003:1). To preserve this situation, European countries are now committed to dealing peacefully with disputes and to cooperating through common institutions. However, they still face security threats and challenges which require an adequate response and, in many cases, international cooperation.

2.2.2. Threats and challenges

Using these documents as basis, it is possible to determine which are the current threats and challenges of the European Union: human rights, improvement of institutions and the rule of law, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, illegal immigration, asylum, regional conflicts, states failures and organised crime.

The interest in these phenomena is reflected in all the instruments that support relations between the EU and the MENA countries.

- From a wide perspective, three are the objectives of the Euro-Mediterranean relations - the three baskets of the Barcelona Process: politics and security matters, trade issues and socio-cultural aspects. More concretely and from the security matters point of view, the main objectives of the EU in the Mediterranean region are the promotion of governance and the rule of law, the improvement of security and the management of migrations flows. For this reason, at regional level, a programme for cooperation in police, judicial and migration matters is being developed and represents an advance to support institutional development and to promote cooperation among civil services[2].

- For many years, the Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, was focused on

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[2] These elements are included in the Association Agreements signed between the EU and the Mediterranean countries, as shows, among other articles, the Go-EuroMed Working Paper No. 0611. Rincón, A., Ramos, E. and Estévez, L. (2006) Soft-security within the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. University Institute for European Studies, CEU San Pablo University, Madrid, Spain.

contributing to strengthening stability in this region of strategic importance and to facilitate the political and economic relations between the EU and the GCC (Cooperation Agreement, 1989) - besides on obtaining a free trade area. However, the principles of the European Common Foreign and Security Policy, the consequences of the Iraq war and EU efforts towards the establishment of an EU Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean and the Middle East have provoked a renewed interest in EU-GCC relations. The new relations are characterised by a political dialogue whose tasks could be the promotion of cooperation in political, economic and social fields, support of the region's domestic reforms efforts including areas such as education, human rights as well as the fight against terrorism.

- Bilateral relations between the EU and Iran are carried out within the framework of a Comprehensive Dialogue started in 1998. Elements of the political part of the dialogue are the following: regional issues, including the Middle East Peace process; non proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; human rights; and the fight against terrorism. However, relations also cover areas such as energy, trade, investment, refugees and drugs control. The relations of the EU with Iraq pursue the development of a secure, stable and democratic Iraq; the establishment of an open, stable, sustainable and diversified market economy; and the political and economic integration of the country into its region and into the international system. However, the great majority of EU actions held in this country are mainly humanitarian. With regards to Yemen, cooperation between this country and the EU is focused on trade and commercial issues, socio-economic development, environmental, cultural and scientific issues and on democracy, human rights, democratisation and cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

2.2.3. EU activities in MENA

In practice, from the perspective of security, the truth is that the EU has taken action in third countries and in MENA countries, of course. Examples of this action are the followings:

- The achievements through cooperation addressed to the main security challenges: human rights, terrorism, organised crime, economic and political reforms and police and judicial cooperation, which with regards to some MENA countries have

been valued and detailed in a previous study (See Rincón, Ramos and Estévez, 2006).

- The Election Observation Missions that have been organised by the EU since 2000. Some of these missions have taken place in MENA region. That is the case with the mission to Parliamentary Elections 2005 in Lebanon (European Union, 2005) and the mission to the Republic of Yemen for the Presidential and Local Elections of September 2006 (European Union, 2006).

- The ESDP operations carried out in the Middle East, such as EUJUST LEX, an integrated rule of law mission for Iraq, established to strengthen the rule of law and promote a culture of respect for human rights in this country; EU BAM Rafah, a mission for border assistance at the crossing point of Rafah between the Palestinian Authority and Israel; and EUPOL COPS, a police mission in the Palestinian territories that has a long-term reform focus and provides enhanced support to the Palestinian Authority in establishing sustainable and effective policing arrangements (Council of the EU, 2007).

2.3. Final remarks

In view of the above analysis, we can conclude that the MENA region is a priority for European Union security. The EU should work in close cooperation with these countries not only for its own benefit, but also to improve the internal situation of this region. According to Franco Frattini "the best protection of our security is a world of well-governed democratic states, (so) we have to invest in democracy, especially in our neighbourhood" and "we must work out how to build security and promote an international order. Societies based on good governance, democracy, the rule of law and respect of human rights will be more effective in preventing domestic threats to their own security and more able and willing to cooperate with us against common international threats"(Frattini, 2007:3).

3. Is the MENA a priority for the United States' Security?

1. Introduction

US interest in the Mediterranean is not a novelty. There is a long history of US diplomacy in the region. Some of the earliest international issues for the United States involved maintaining open access to trade routes in the Mediterranean by the US merchant ships (Dillery, 2006:7-

8). In recent decades the United States has been involved in almost all the diplomatic initiatives undertaken by one or other countries related to dialogue and cooperation in the Mediterranean. One of the main proposals in the nineties of the United States was the 1st Summit of the Middle East and North Africa, which brought together in Casablanca, in 1994, the representatives of 61 countries and more than 1,200 businessmen (Bin, 1997). The participation of United States in the Israeli-Arab peace process has been also a major issue in recent years.

2. US approach towards MENA

2.1. Foreign Policy issues

Nowadays, at the Department of State level, the United States policy towards the region is focused on the "Near East". This term comprises the following list of countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Iran, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lybia, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, which is a section of the Under Secretary for Political Affairs of the Secretary of State, deals therefore with the maghreb and mashrek together. This area is commonly known as MENA (Middle East and North Africa).

There are four specific topics to which the US pays special attention in its foreign policy in the MENA: Iraq, the Middle East Process, Terrorism, and economic and political reform in the region. All these elements are interrelated. However each of them could be seen as a main issue in itself.

2.1.1 Iraq

According to the US Department of State the focus of United States policy in Iraq remains on helping the Iraqi people build a constitutional, representative government that respects the rights of all Iraqis and has security forces capable of maintaining order and preventing the country from becoming a safe haven for terrorists and foreign fighters (Bureau of Near Easter Affaires, 2007). The policy towards Iraq is very much influenced by the war against terrorism, in which the US wants Iraq to be an ally. The Senate is interfering in this policy, which supported by President Bush, by pushing for the withdrawal of troops (White House, 2007).

2.1.2. Middle East Peace Process

US policy in relation to the peace process is developed through the Middle East Quartet (United Nations, European Union, Russian Federation and United States). Tony Blair's recent appointment as the Quartet's Representative to the Middle East has been a major step in this sense. The US believes in a common approach to this issue from the Quartet. Besides the Quartet activity, the Secretary of State consults with regional leaders and explores ways to help the parties make progress toward resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is quite interesting to note that trips of the Secretary of State to the Middle East comprise normally a visit to Europe[3]. The interrelation between US policy and European Union Policy in this subject is evident.

2.2.3. Counterterrorism

In order to fight against terrorism the US has created the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism that coordinates and supports the development and implementation of all U.S Government policies and programs aimed at countering terrorism overseas. The mission of the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism is to develop and lead a worldwide effort to combat terrorism using all the instruments of statecraft: diplomacy, economic power, intelligence, law enforcement, and the military[4]. A fundamental matter in the fight against terrorism is the list of state sponsors of terrorism. Iran and Syria are the two countries within MENA which are within this category. On June 30, 2006, the US rescinded Libya's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism. The four main categories of sanctions resulting from inclusion in the list include restrictions on US foreign assistance; a ban on defence exports and sales; certain controls over exports of dual use items; and miscellaneous financial and other restrictions (Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, 2006).

2.1.4. Economic and Political Reform

The US seeks to promote economic and political reform in order to transform the near East into a more democratic region. This task is performed mainly through the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), established by then-Secretary Powell on December 2002. The

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[3] Trips in 2007: Feb. 16-22, Middle East and Europe (Iraq, Israel, the Palestinian Territories, Jordan and Germany); and Jan. 12-19, Middle East and Europe (Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom and Germany). Trips in 2006: Nov. 27-Dec. 1, Europe and the Middle East (Estonia, Latvia and Jordan; July 23-31, Middle East, Europe, and Asia (Lebanon, Israel, Italy); Apr. 24-28, Europe and Middle East (Turkey, Greece, Iraq, and Bulgaria); Mar. 29-Apr. 4, Europe and Middle East (Germany, France, United Kingdom and Iraq). Information available in www.state.gov, Travels with the Secretary.

[4] Information available in www.state.gov, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism.

initiative provides a framework and funding for the United States to expand the four pillars of MEPI: economic, political, educational, and women's empowerment.

2.2. Defence issues

The US foreign and defence policies have an important lack of coherence. There is no standing mechanism for integrating the activities of all U.S. government players in a given region. Each of the key national security departments defines the regions differently, creating sometimes troublesome seams and overlaps in the policy implementation process (Murdock and Flournoy, 2005). For example, the State Department divides the world into six regions: Africa, Europe and Eurasia, Near East, Western Hemisphere, East Asia and Pacific, and South Asia. The Office of the Secretary of Defense divides the world into four regions: Africa, Asia and Pacific, Near East and South Asia, and Western Hemisphere. Within the CIA's Directorate of Intelligence, the world is divided into the following regions: Asia Pacific, Latin America, Africa, Near East and South Asia, and Russia and Europe. The Unified Command Plan divides the world into 5 areas of responsibility: NORTHCOM has the US, Canada and Mexico, SOUTHCOM has Central and South America, CENTCOM has the Middle East and the Newly Independent States of former USSR, EUCOM has Greenland, Europe, Russia and Africa, and PACOM has India, China, the rest of the Pacific, Australia and Antarctica (Murdock and Flournoy, 2005). It is interesting in this sense to see how the US military structure influences regional co-operation in MENA.

2.2.1. The Military Structure

A Unified Combatant Command (COCOM) is a United States joint military command composed of forces from two or more services, which has a broad and continuing mission, and is organised either on a geographical or on a functional basis. The US defence strategy towards the region as it stands today is managed by two combatant commands. EUCOM area of responsibility comprises 92 nations in Europe, Africa and Eurasia. In relation to the Mediterranean partners of the European Union, EUCOM activity is focused in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Turkey and Lybia. The remaining MENA countries are under the control of CENTCOM.

As a result there is no clear focus on the Mediterranean area from the US defence perspective. There are two military commands in charge of the whole area. However there are interactions between them as EUCOM considers that one of its missions should be the peace in the Broader Middle East[5]. Anyhow, the structure may change in 2008 with the creation of a new

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[5] Commnader's Vision. Command Mission. (available at http://www.eucom.mil).

command. AFRICOM is the result of an internal reorganisation of the U.S. military command structure, creating one administrative headquarters devoted solely to Africa. Among other things the creation of AFRICOM is a response to the strategic competition of China (García, 2007). For the purposes of the analysis of the incentives for cooperation in the Mediterranean region, this change of structure will make a subtle change. The North African countries which were under the control of EUCOM will be under the supervision of AFRICOM, whereas the Middle East (including Egypt) will remain controlled by CENTCOM. Turkey will be monitored by EUCOM. Another consequence of the modifications is that Europe will be separated from the military strategy devoted to Africa.

2.2.2. Cooperation Incentives

As long as the defence policy of the United States in the Mediterranean is split into two different areas, the incentives for regional cooperation originating from the US defence policy will not be global.

A) Africa

As the US National Security Strategy 2002 states, 'Africa's capable reforming states and sub-regional organisations must be strengthened as the primary means to address transnational threats on a sustained basis'. EUCOM aims at cultivating and sustaining relations with, among other organisations, the African Union (Craddock, 2007). It is expected that this regional organisation will be one of the main partners of AFRICOM.

Special attention in this area should be put into the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI). Its aim is to assist governments in this region to better control their territory and to prevent terrorists from setting up safe havens in Africa. TSCTI was planned as a follow-on to the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI) that began in 2002, and helped train and equip at least one rapid-reaction company, about 150 soldiers, in each of the four Saharan states: Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad. Then it expanded to include Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria.

B) Broader Middle East

The top priority of CENTCOM is achieving stability and security in Iraq as the violence threatens the region, and inhibits essential economic progress. The initiatives of the command are organised into five focus areas: setting conditions for stability in Iraq; expanding governance and security in Afghanistan; degrading violent extremist networks and operations; strengthening relationships and influencing states to contribute to regional stability; and

posturing the force to build and sustain joint and combined war fighting capabilities and readiness (Fallon, 2007).

Among those priorities it is possible to detect an interest in contributing to regional stability. The US is trying to influence states and organisations such as the Gulf Cooperation Council in order to achieve this aim and ensure finally the free flow of commerce and positive economic growth. Gulf Cooperation Council members (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) are important partners in maintaining stability. Cooperation is however held on a bilateral basis. Egypt and Jordan are the other countries with which the US has special links in the region.

3. Final remarks

The US Department of State's foreign policy in the Mediterranean area is based in a broad spectrum that covers the whole MENA region. The Department uses the general term "Near East" that corresponds with MENA. There are four main topics to which US foreign policy pays attention: Iraq, the Middle East peace process, counterterrorism and Economic and Political Reform. The US interests are mainly based in security issues. In this area the US army is structured in a way that reveals an important lack of coherence. We could conclude that US Defence and foreign policies in MENA are not integrated.

4. Instruments for cooperation

1. What are the instruments for security cooperation between the US and the EU?

The United States and the European Union have been cooperating in security and defence ever since the early stages of the European integration process. The US and the EU are not only united by a common history and cultural values, but they also share similar challenges and external threats that have led them to develop close cooperation in many of their strategies. Over the last two decades the need for cooperation between the two sides of the Atlantic has increased steadily, not only in defence and security but also within a much broader context of foreign policy. Globalisation has also led to a deeper cooperation in trade and economic policy. Security and defence cooperation increased particularly in response to two main events that shocked the world and brought it into a new era: the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989 that put an end to the Cold war, and the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, which initiated a new era of international terrorism. Within the eighteen years in which

these events have taken place a series of security cooperation instruments have developed. Some have evolved from defence agreements that already existed such as NATO, others are the result of a new agreement such as the Transatlantic Agenda, and finally there are some which have emerged in response to the new challenges of the 21st century, particularly in relation to the Middle East and North African countries.

We will firstly analyse all instruments for security cooperation between the United States and the European Union; and secondly the outcome of this cooperation and the degree to which it has given the expected results; finally we will assess the degree to which cooperation has been more effective in other spheres like trade and development.

The main landmark for cooperation in all spheres, including security, that the two sides of the Atlantic have developed in their history is the Transatlantic Relation. On 22 November 1990, the US and the EU signed the so-called Transatlantic Relation by which they agreed not only to establish a closer cooperation but also to establish the mechanisms for carrying it. Following this agreement the Transatlantic Agenda was signed in Madrid in June 1995, based on a framework for action with four major goals:

- Promoting peace and stability, democracy and development around the world.Work for an increasingly stable and prosperous Europe; foster democracy and economic reform in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in Russia, Ukraine and other new independent states; secure peace in the Middle East; advance human rights; promote non-proliferation and cooperation on development and humanitarian assistance.

- Responding to global challenges. Fight international crime, drug-trafficking and terrorism; address the needs of refugees and displaced persons; protect the environment and combat disease.

- Contributing to the expansion of world and closer economic relations. Together, we will strengthen the multilateral trading system and take concrete, practical steps to promote closer economic relations between us.

- Building bridges across the Atlantic. Work with business people, scientists, educators and others to improve communications and to ensure that future generations remain as committed as we are to developing a full and equal partnership.

The Transatlantic Agenda constituted a very ambitious programme that was certainly not only going to improve the relationship between the governments of the United States and the

European Union, but also substantially improve the economic relationship and develop a sense of partnership within civil society. However, a more controversial issue is the extent to which it has led to efficient results in the spheres of foreign policy, security and defence,[6] and above all if the instruments established for carrying out these aims have been the most appropriate.

The US and the EU have used a wide range of instruments for security cooperation within the aims of the Transatlantic Agenda with mixed results, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. The United Nations constitutes one of the most powerful and influential instruments for joint US-EU actions.

It is very important to take into consideration that the US and EU member states are not only the main economic contributors to the United Nations but they are also among the most influential powers. The US together with Britain and France are permanent members of the Security Council. This is the reason why all agreements and joint declarations made by the US and the EU are always done in respect with the principles of the charter of the United Nations, furthermore the two consider themselves as the most important upholders of the principles of democracy and human rights on which the United Nations was founded. For this reason when they claim to defend the model of liberal democracy in the international sphere or promote the market economy they are not only promoting their system internationally due to self interest, but also promoting the systems that are the most widely accepted in the United Nations.

The United Nations has several instruments for defending peace and security in the world. The US and the EU have used these instruments in all major conflicts with mixed results. The best example of a joint US-EU foreign intervention backed by a UN resolution is the first Gulf War in 1991, to liberate Kuwait against Iraqi invasion. UN resolution 660 condemned this invasion and a subsequent resolution 678 gave Iraq a deadline to withdraw and authorised the necessary means to implement it. As a result an international coalition of 34 countries went to war against Iraq to make it withdraw from Kuwait. On the other hand, the second Gulf war in 2003 is the most obvious example of a conflict in which the US and the EU have been incapable of adopting a common strategy towards Iraq; the two sides of the Atlantic agreed on the approach towards Iraq until 2002. UN security council resolution 1441, was passed unanimously on 8 November, 2002 giving Iraq a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations that had been set out in previous resolutions. However there was no

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[6] Pet Dannreuther, Security and Transatlantic Relations, Routledge, 2006.

agreement on how to proceed if Iraq did not comply. Whereas the US and other European governments like Britain, Spain, Italy or Poland supported the need to declare war, others led by France and Germany were against the use of force against this country. The outbreak of war on Iraq led to a confrontation between the EU and the EU and also provoked a deep division within EU member states in relation to this war. It shows the extent to which a UN resolution can fail to unify EU-US security and defence strategies unless there is absolute consensus on how to interpret these resolutions. Another factor that makes EU-US joint actions difficult to work within the framework of UN resolutions is the fact that EU as an organisation is not represented in the UN Security Council and it is represented by individual member states. [7]

Another important instrument for security cooperation between the two sides of the Atlantic are the existing defence organisations, mainly NATO. The twelve Western democracies that set up the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in 1949 agreed to defend each other in case of an attack by a third power and also to cooperate in defence initiatives and modernisation of their armies. NATO, originally conceived as a defence organisation against the Soviet Union, lost its *raison d´etre* in 1989, when its member states ceased to have a common enemy. However, the existing member states agreed that NATO should continue existing as a defence organisation, not only against possible common enemies that they could have in future, but also to contribute to peace and security in regions where the interests of the member states were at stake.

Since the end of the Cold War NATO has not only enlarged to a total of 26 members but also intervened in several major conflicts. NATO proved to be particularly effective coordinating the defence of the United States and the rest of the member states after the terrorist attacks of 11 September, 2001. Twenty four hours after these infamous attacks against the United States, they were declared an attack against all NATO member states, in accordance with Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. This landmark decision was followed by practical measures aimed at assisting the United States in different fields, in relation to its campaign against terrorism. NATO operations contributed to strengthening of security measures within the US territory. As regards the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, NATO had no role in the campaign but undertook a number of measures in accordance with Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty, to ensure the security of its members, for example strengthening Turkey's security in the event of a threat resulting from the war in Iraq.

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[7] Karen A. Mingst, The UN in the 21st century, Westwiev Press, 2006.

The fact that the most important security challenges for NATO members are in the southern Mediterranean and in the Middle East have led the organisation to focus its attention on this area. An important initiative in this sphere was the Mediterranean Dialogue, launched in 1994 as a forum of cooperation between NATO and seven countries from southern Mediterranean with the aim of contributing to regional security and stability by achieving mutual understanding and dispelling misconceptions about NATO within these countries.

The other defence organisation that can contribute to security within the EU and US is the Organisation for Security Cooperation in Europe. With 56 members from Europe, North America and central Asia, this organisation is the largest regional security organisation in the world. The OSCE is a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in its area. It has 19 missions or field operations in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. It also maintains formal relations with countries in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. Although this organisation has proved useful as a discussion forum for the EU and the US, particularly in relation with other member states, its regional scope and the fact that it has no military structure like NATO have not allowed it to evolve as an efficient security organisation for both the EU and US. Therefore, it is clear that if there is to be a military backbone for US-EU cooperation it is NATO.

The fact that the most serious security challenges are not conventional armies or weapons but rather international terrorism, has made police and judicial cooperation between the EU and the US become an essential cooperation instrument. 9/11 gave new momentum for making progress in this field.[8] Since then, both sides of the Atlantic have made a great effort in this field. For many years, EU efforts to address such challenges were hampered by national sovereignty concerns and lack of trust among law enforcement agencies. Over recent years, the EU has sought to speed up its efforts to harmonise national laws and bring down barriers among member states´ law enforcement authorities, so that information can be shared and suspects apprehended expeditiously. Very important in this field was the common definition of terrorism by all EU member states together with a list of terrorist groups. From the US side the 9/11 Commission's recommendations included that the United States should develop a "comprehensive coalition strategy" against Islamist terrorism, terrorist information with trusted allies and improve border security through better international cooperation.

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[8] Kirstin Archick, UE-EU cooperation against terrorism, CRS Report for Congress.

The Secretary of State, the US Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security meet at the ministerial level with their respective EU counterparts at least once a year, and a US-EU working group of senior officials meets once every six months to discuss police and judicial cooperation against terrorism. Europol has posted two liaison officers in Washington and the United States has stationed an FBI liaison officer in The Hague to work with Europol on counterterrorism. In addition, the United States and the EU have established a high-level policy dialogue on border and transport security to discuss issues such as passenger data-sharing, cargo security, biometrics, visa policy and sky marshals.

Police and Judicial cooperation accords have played a very important role. In 2001 and 2002, two U.S-Europol agreements were concluded to allow US law enforcement authorities and Europol to share both strategic information as well as personal information. In 2003, the United States and the EU signed two treaties on extradition and mutual legal assistance to help simplify the extradition process and promote better prosecutorial cooperation. The US death penalty and the extradition of EU nationals were particularly sensitive issues which posed major obstacles in these negotiations. Washington effectively agreed to EU demands that suspects extradited from the EU will not face the death penalty, which EU law bans. EU officials also relented on their initial demands that the treaty guarantee the extradition of any EU national.

The United States and the EU have been placing increasing emphasis on cooperation in the area of border control and transport security, as seen by the creation of the high level policy dialogue on theses issues. In April 2004, the United States and EU signed a customs cooperation accord; among other measures, it calls for extending the US. Container Security Initiative throughout the Union.

Despite US-EU efforts since 2001 to foster closer counterterrorism and law enforcement cooperation, and a shared commitment to do so, some challenges remain. Some US officials doubt the utility of collaborating with EU-wide bodies given good existing bilateral relations between the FBI and CIA and national police and intelligence services in individual EU member states. Many note that Europol and Eurojust lack enforcement capabilities, and that national services are often reluctant to share information with each other, let alone with US authorities. Other analysts point out that European opposition to the US death penalty or resistance to handling over their own nationals may still slow or prevent the extradition of terrorist suspects. Above all, differences persist in the EU-US terrorist lists. And some differences persist in the US and EU terrorist lists. For example, some EU members refuse to include Lebanon-based Hizbollah in the common terrorist list.

Despite the important progress made over the last years, the main obstacle for police and judicial cooperation is undoubtedly the disagreement on the causes of international terrorism and the methods for its elimination. Most EU members link terrorism with political and economic problems that need to be addressed and also believe that it can be fought effectively by law enforcement and police actions; on the other hand, in the United States terrorism is largely seen as a new type of war, the so-called war on terror that can only be won by military means. Europeans also stress the importance of so-called soft-power towards the Mediterranean and the Middle East. For this reason they have been increasingly critical of US actions that have caused indignation within the Muslim world. On the whole, different mentalities and philosophies of power are the main obstacle to further security cooperation between EU and US.

2. Are there other possibilities?

The other way for promoting security in the Mediterranean and the Middle East is via the less conventional and more indirect method of promoting democratisation and economic development. The EU has been particularly active in this field; half of the total amount invested in developing countries comes from the EU member states. A very important initiative in this aspect has been the European Neighbourhood Policy, and tailor-made action plans for individual countries, through which democratisation and economic development is being promoted in Middle East and North Africa. This is the reason why the EU is in a stronger position to promote democratisation in this part of the world. The US is also a very important source of development aid, particularly at private level.

As they agreed to do on signing the Transatlantic Agenda in 1995, the US and the EU have jointly contributed to strengthen the multilateral trade system and substantially increased economic relations with North African and Middle Eastern countries. Trade and economic development have always been fields in which great progress can be made and it is therefore a way for compensating for lack of progress in security cooperation, which have not only often confronted the US and the EU but also led to a more dangerous confrontation between North and South, and East and West that can ultimately alienate North Africa and the Middle East from the Western world.

5. Policy recommendations

1. Compatibility of security interest: Are US and EU foreign policy objectives towards MENA compatible?

The US and the EU have many similar strategic interests in the Middle East and North Africa, due to the fact that Mediterranean is a sum of almost all the major issues that the international community currently faces. Following Haizam Amirah Fernández, "there is a broad spectrum of concerns, ranging from stability, development, energy security and democratisation to international migrations, terrorism, drug and human trafficking and environmental protection" (Amirah, 2007:2). However, between the two areas there are differences in strategic cultures and historical experiences that affect the priorities and approaches towards the region and that justify divergent policies and different perceptions of threats.

As common elements of the US and EU policy towards MENA, we have identified three matters of interest:

- The Middle East Peace Process.

- The Fight against Terrorism

- The Political and Economic Reform at regional level.

As main differences of these two policies, we can point out the following aspects:

- In US we can find a special department within the Department of State which focuses the attention to the whole MENA region. The EU does not see MENA as a unique area. The EU foreign policy towards MENA has not, in principle, the same root.

- In contrast with the US, the EU does not have a Defence Strategy. Furthermore, at the EU level there are no specific forces devoted to MENA. US defence policy divides MENA in two. On the one hand EUCOM (AFRICOM after 2008) deals with Northern African countries, on the other CENTCOM deals with the Middle East.

- The European cooperation in cultural issues and the special interest that the US has in Iraq are examples of divergences between the policies of these external actors.

2. Asymmetric evolution of US-EU co-operation

Progress made in the economic aspects of the Atlantic Agenda proved the extent to which US-EU cooperation can be effective if they really share an aim as well as the means for achieving it. Perseverance in this sphere is absolutely essential, since economics is a way of compensating for misunderstandings in security and defence policy.

3. Policy Recommendations

To continue with the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on the basis of the existing instruments and developing the agreed objectives.

- To promote a Mediterranean Union like that proposed by Sarkozy (Informe Semanal de Política Exterior, 2007). This initiative could be very interesting to the EU at a political level, not only like the development of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, but also because that Union could include a huge internal market, and the reduction of the migration pressure towards the North as a consequence of economic progress in neighbouring countries.

- To find and foster the common interests of the European Union and US in the Mediterranean. Cooperation in specific areas may spill over to other policies. Incentives for cooperation based in US and EU policies already exist in MENA (i.e. Gulf countries). If those efforts were to be put together they would probably be more effective.

- To continue making progress with the European Neighbourhood Policy. This is the best example of the efficiency of the EU's soft power in North Africa and the Middle East that can substantially improve relations with these countries and compensate for anti Western attitudes that have prevailed in this area, mainly as a result of US actions.

- To increase the economic resources as well as the support for the NATO Mediterranean dialogue initiative that may lead to military and security cooperation with countries in the region. In case of armed conflict, NATO is clearly the military backbone of US-EU cooperation.

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